

WHAT IS THE HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM?

Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Emergency Assistance Act created the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) in November 1988. The HMGP assists states and local communities in implementing long-term hazard mitigation measures following a major disaster declaration. The grant is a cost-share of 75% federal share and 25% state and/or local share.

On October 30, 2000, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act was amended by Public Law 106-390 and is referred to as the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). At this time, regulations for implementing this amended Act are being written. For all disasters declared after October 30, 2000—local mitigation plans must be developed that include:

- ♦ Public and private sector involvement in the planning process;
- ♦ Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment;
- ♦ A mitigation strategy that identifies mitigation goals, measures and priorities;
- ♦ A plan maintenance and review process; and
- ♦ Documentation that the governing body of the jurisdiction requesting approval of the plan has formally adopted the plan.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program objectives are:

- ♦ To prevent future losses of lives and property due to disasters;
- ♦ To implement state or local Hazard Mitigation plans;

- ♦ To enable mitigation measures to be implemented during immediate recovery from a disaster; and
- ♦ To provide funding for previously identified mitigation measures that benefit the disaster area.

HOW DOES THE HMGP DIFFER FROM MITIGATION FUNDED UNDER THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

Mitigation projects may also be identified and funded through FEMA's Public Assistance Program following a disaster declaration. Public Assistance funds allow an existing damaged facility to incorporate mitigation measures during repairs, if measures are cost-effective or are required by code. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the state or local applicants can identify potential mitigation measures.

Mitigation funded under Public Assistance is only for public facilities damaged by the disaster. The HMGP can fund mitigation measures to protect public or private property, so long as these measures fit within the overall mitigation strategy for the disaster area, and comply with program guidelines. For public property damaged in the disaster, it is more appropriate to fund mitigation measures under Section 406 before applying to the HMGP.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Applicant eligibility is the same for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program as it is for the Public Assistance Program. Applicants who are eligible for the HMGP are:

- ♦ State and local governments;
- ♦ Certain private non-profit organizations or institutions; and

- ♦ Indian tribes or authorized tribal organizations and Alaska Native villages or organizations.

WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS CAN BE FUNDED?

The HMGP can be used to fund projects to protect either public or private property. Examples of projects include:

- ♦ Acquisition and relocation of structures from hazard-prone areas;
- ♦ Retrofitting, such as floodproofing to protect structures from future damage;
- ♦ Elevation of structures or utilities;
- ♦ Structural hazard control, such as debris basins, floodwalls, rip rap; or wetland restoration; and
- ♦ Storm and infrastructure protective measures.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Eligible applicants must apply for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program through the state, since the state is responsible for administering the program. In order to receive HMGP funding, eligible applicants are required to apply through a formal grant application process. The process includes a benefit-cost analysis, and an environmental and historical preservation assessment. Eligible applicants should contact the State Hazard Mitigation Officer for specific details.

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR APPLYING FOR FUNDS?

All projects must be approved and obligated within 2 years of the disaster declaration.

HMGP project applications need to be submitted to the state as soon as possible following a disaster so that mitigation opportunities are not lost during reconstruction.

HOW MUCH MONEY IS AVAILABLE IN THE HMGP?

FEMA can fund up to 75% of the eligible costs of each project. The state or local match is 25% and does not need to be cash: in-kind services or materials may be used. For each disaster, total HMGP funding is 7.5% of the federal funds spent on the Public and Individual Assistance programs (minus administrative expenses).

HOW ARE POTENTIAL PROJECTS IDENTIFIED AND SELECTED FOR FUNDING?

The State's Administrative Plan governs how projects are selected for funding. However, proposed projects must meet certain minimum criteria. These criteria are designed to ensure that the most cost-effective and appropriate projects are selected for funding. The law and implementing regulations require that the projects are part of an overall mitigation strategy. This requirement is met by incorporating the state's mitigation strategy for every disaster in the State's Administrative Plan.

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